

Message Text

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ACTION EA-07

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-10 L-02

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FM AMCONSUL PORT MORESBY

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0129

INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 PORT MORESBY 0246

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PGOV, PINT, PP

SUBJECT: CPC NATIONALIST PRESSURE GROUP PUSHES
PNG POLITICAL REALIGNMENT AND GOVERNMENT
OPPOSITION AGREEMENT ON MOST CONSTITUTIONAL
ISSUES

REF: (A) PORT MORESBY 85; (B) PORT MORESBY 130;
(C) PORT MORESBY 151; (D) PORT MORESBY 233

SUMMARY: AFTER SEVERAL WEEKS OF INTENSE POLITICAL
MANEUVERING, IT IS EVIDENT THAT (A) SOMARE IS
STILL IN THE SADDLE ALTHOUGH HIS COALITION MAY
BE A MINORITY GROUP, (B) SOMARE HAS HAD TO COM-
PROMISE ON SEVERAL IMPORTANT POINTS,
(C) PARTY STRUCTURE CONTINUES TO BE VERY FLUID,
AND (D) THE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY IS NOW MOVING AHEAD
BRISKLY WITH THE CONSTITUTION AND TOWARDS INDEPENDENCE.

BACKGROUND:

1. REF (A) REPORTED CPC FACTION IN HOUSE AND CPC
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REPORT HAD BECOME RALLYING POINT AGAINST SOMARE.

REF (B) CITED CREATION OF COUNTRY PARTY ON AUGUST 20 AND VIEWS OF UNITED PARTY LEADERSHIP THAT COUNTRY PARTY WAS ESSENTIALLY CPC FRONT. UNITED PARTY LEADERS EXPECTED CPC FACTION TO BE ANNOUNCED WHICH WOULD EVENTUALLY FORCE SOMARE TO BRING UNITED PARTY INTO COALITION, THEREBY EFFECTING FORMAL RESTRUCTURING OF POWER. REF (C) PROVIDED PANGU LEADER VIEWS TO EFFECT THAT DEVELOPMENT CPC FACTION COULD LEAVE COALITION WITH MINORITY VOTE, THE LACK OF WHICH WOULD BE COMPENSATED BY UNITED PARTY SUPPORT ON SELECTED ISSUES. ASSERTED CHIEF MINISTER RELUCTANT ENTER COALITION WITH UNITED PARTY FOR FEAR SPLITTING HOUSE INTO MODERATE AND RADICAL FACTIONS. REF (D) REPORT ANNOUNCEMENT CREATION CPC PRESSURE GROUP ON SEPTEMBER 27.

2. THIS REPORT PROVIDES INITIAL COMMENT ON INDIVIDUALS IN NATIONALIST PRESSURE GROUP ANNOUNCED BY FATHER MOMIS AND EFFECT ITS ESTABLISHMENT ON INFORMAL RESTURCTURING OF HOUSE FOR PURPOSES OF CONSTITUTIONAL DEBATE.

3. OF THE NINE MEMBERS DRAWN FROM GOVT. COALITION FIVE ARE FORMER CPC MEMBERS, AND TWO OTHERS ARE MATUANGAN ASSN. REPS WHICH WOULD BE EXPECTED TO FOLLOW KAPUTIN IN HIS OPPOSITION TO THE CHIEF MINISTER. SOMARE HAD OFFERED A PORTFOLIO TO KAPUTIN ON 25 SEPT (COMMERCE) IN THE EXPECTATION, IT IS RUMORED, THAT HE WOULD REFUSE IT THEREBY FREEING THE GOVT TO INITIATE PROCEDURES TO EFFECT HIS REMOVAL FROM THE CABINET. DEFECTION OF TWO NEW GUINEA NATIONAL PARTY MEMBERS CAN BE EXPLAINED AS RESULT OF BACK BENCHER DISCONTENT WITH MINISTRY AND PERSONALITIES INVOLVED. UNDERSTAND ADDITIONAL NEW GUINEA NATIONAL PARTY REP MAY HAVE JOINED CPC PRESSURE GROUP TODAY.

4. OF NINE MEMBERS DRAWN FROM NON-COALITION
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PARTIES FIVE WERE FORMER CPC MEMBERS, FOUR OF WHOM WERE UNITED PARTY. SINAKE GIREGIRE WAS ABLE TO BRING THREE COUNTRY PARTY MEMBERS INTO THE PRESSURE GROUP, GIVING SOME SLIGHT CREDITIBILITY TO THESIS THAT COUNTRY PARTY WAS EXTABLISHED AS CPC FRONT. IT IS JUST AS LIKELY, HOWEVER, THAT THIS REFLECTS PERSONAL LOYALTY TO GIREGIRE RATHER THAN IDEOLOGICAL BIAS TOWARD CPC. FIVE COUNTRY PARTY

MEMBERS DID NOT JOIN PRESSURE GROUP THEREBY DEMONSTRATING THAT COUNTRY PARTY ALREADY SPLIT. DEFECTION BRERE AWOL FROM UNITED PARTY COMPLETE MYSTERY AS MAN IS IRON CONSERVATIVE. HE IS CLOSE TO PAUL LANGRO AND MAY HAVE FOLLOWED HIS LEAD. THE TRULY SERIOUS BLOW TO THE UNITED PARTY WAS THE DEFECTION OF DEPUTY OPPOSITION LEADER PAUL LANGRO WHO WAS A FORMER MEMBER OF THE CPC. UNITED IS PUTTING THE SCREWS TO HIM AND HAS PUT HIM ON NOTICE THAT HE WILL LOSE HIS POSITION AS DEPUTY OPPOSITION LEADER IF HE DOES NOT SUPPORT THE PARTY. IT IS PROBABLE THAT DURING THE NEXT TWO WEEKS SEVERAL MEMBERS WILL DROP OUT OF THE PRESSURE GROUP AND PERHAPS A FEW NEW ONES JOIN. THIS WILL HAVE LITTLE SIGNIFICANCE UNLESS MAJOR POLITICAL PERSONALITIES ARE INVOLVED.

5. EFFECT ON CONSTITUTIONAL DEBATE. THIS SESSION'S DEBATE ON CONSTITUTION SAW THE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION TABLE COMMENTS AND PROPOSED AMENDMENTS BY THE UNITED PARTY ON 24 SEPTEMBER. SAME DAY THE HOUSE RESOLVED ITSELF INTO A COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE TO DISCUSS THE CONSTITUTION. FATHER MOMIS ANNOUNCED THE CREATION OF THE CPC BASED NATIONALIST PRESSURE GROUP OON THE 27TH AND LATER IN THE AFTERNOON THE CHIEF MINISTER MOVED THAT THE HOUSE SET DRAFTING INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE NEW CONSTITUTION BASED ON THE CPC REPORT AS AMENDED BY THE GOVERNMENT WHITE PAPER. THIS WAS FOLLOWED SHORTLY BY A MOTION BY THE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION TO THE EFFECT THAT THE INSTRUCTIONS SHOULD BE SUBJECT TO THE MODIFICATIONS OF THE GOVERNMENT WHITE PAPER AS PROPOSED IN THE UNITED PARTY PAPER. IT IS CONFIDENTIAL

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PROBABLE THAT PRIOR TO THE DEBATE ON THE 27TH THAT THE GOVERNMENT DID NOT BELIEVE IT NEEDED TO TAKE THE AMENDMENTS OF THE UNITED PARTY INTO CONSIDERATION UNLESS SUCH AMENDMENTS ACTUALLY IMPROVED THE PROPOSED DRAFTING INSTRUCTIONS. THE EFFECT OF MOMIS' ANNOUNCEMENT ON THE MORNING OF THE 27TH WAS TO BRING INTO QUESTION WHETHER THE COALITION STILL HAD SUFFICIENT VOTES TO CHALLENGE ALL COMERS. THE POLOFF FOUND THE HOUSE IN STATE OF CONFUSION ON AFTERNOON OF 27TH WITH BOTH UNITED AND COALITION LEADERS IN DEPRESSED OR ANGRY STATE, SOME EXPRESSING BELIEF HOUSE SHOULD BE ADJOURNED UNTIL DUST HAD SETTLED. DEBATE ON THE CONSTITUTION WAS ALLOWED TO CONTINUE BUT THE GOVERNMENT DID NOT LET VOTING BEGIN. BY END OF DAY UNITED PARTY

REPS WHILE UNHAPPY AT SITUATION EXPRESSED BELIEF
THAT GOVT AND OPPOSITION HAD TO COME TO AGREEMENT AND
STATED THAT GOVT OPPOSITION CAUCUS HAD BEEN SCHEDULED
FOR AFTERNOON OF NEXT DAY (SATURDAY).

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ACTION EA-07

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-10 L-02

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R 080333Z OCT 74

FM AMCONSUL PORT MORESBY

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0130

INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 PORT MORESBY 0246

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

6. DURING THE WEEKEND AN AGREEMENT WAS REACHED
BETWEEN THE COALITION AND OPPOSITION AND ON MONDAY
SEPTEMBER 30 HOUSE WAS TRANQUIL WITH GOVT AND UNITED
PARTY MEMBERS EXUDING CONFIDENCE.

7. POLOFF WAS INFORMED THAT GOVERNMENT ACCEPTS MOST
OF THE MODIFICATIONS DESIRED BY THE UNITED PARTY
IN RETURN FOR UNITED PARTY SUPPORT. THE GOVERNMENT
AGREES THAT PRIOR TO INDEPENDENCE NOT ONLY MUST THE
CONSTITUTION BE ADOPTED BUT ALSO THE MOST IMPORTANT
ORGANIC LAWS WHICH FOLLOW FROM IT. THESE WILL COVER
THE DETAILS RE PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEES, CITIZENSHIP,
PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND THE
OMBUDSMAN COMMISSION. IT IS NOT NOW
ANTICIPATED THAT THE REQUIREMENT FOR ORGANIC
LEGISLATION WILL DELAY THE DATE OF INDEPENDENCE
MUCH BEYOND APRIL OR MAY OF NEXT YEAR - THE PERIOD
CONSIDERED AS A REASONABLE TARGET DATE. THE

GOVERNMENT HAS NEARLY COMPLETED DRAFT LEGISLATION
ON THE REQUIRED SUBJECTS. THE UNITED PARTY
ACCEPTS THE GOVT POSITION ON NATIONAL PRINCIPLES
AND THE GOVT WISH TO REMOVE NATIONAL INVESTMENT
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CODE FROM THE CONSTITUTION. IT SUPPORTS GOVT
DRAFT OF LEADERSHIP CODE WITH MINOR AMENDMENTS
AND GOVT PROVISIONS RE CITIZENSHIP. THESE MATTERS
COVER THE FIRST FOUR CHAPTERS OF THE CONSTITUTION.
DETAILS REGARDING THE REMAINING CHAPTERS ARE YET
TO BE WORKED OUT. THE FIRST THREE CHAPTERS WERE
PASSED BY THE HOUSE IN TWO DAYS, STRIKING TESTIMONY
TO THE FACT THAT THE AGREEMENT IS BEING HONORED.

8. ONE MAJOR POINT OF DISAGREEMENT EXISTS
BETWEEN THE GOVT AND THE OPPOSITION. THE GOVT
DESIRES THAT THE MINISTRY AND THE SPEAKER OF
THE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY SHALL CONTINUE IN OFFICE
UPON THE COMING INTO FORCE OF THE CONSTITUTION.
THE UNITED PARTY HAS STATED THAT THERE SHOULD BE
A FRESH ELECTION IN THE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY OF
PRIME MINISTER AND THE APPOINTMENT OF NEW MINISTERS
BY THE PRIME MINISTER WHEN THE NEW CONSTITUTION COMES
INTO FORCE. THERE HAS ALREADY BEEN A STATEMENT
ATTRIBUTED TO THE AUSTRALIAN PRESS THAT THE UNITED
PARTY WILL JOIN WITH OTHER OPPONENTS OF THE GOVT TO
INSIST THAT THERE WILL BE A REELECTION OF THE
CHIEF MINISTER WHEN THE CONSTITUTION COMES INTO FORCE.
THIS IS THE UNITED PARTY'S BID TO BE BROUGHT INTO THE
MINISTRY. ACCORDING TO A RADIO BROADCAST ON MONDAY
THE CHIEF MINISTER STILL DOES NOT DESIRE TO BRING
THE UNITED PARTY INTO THE COALITION. ISSUE WILL BE
CONTESTED IN NEXT FEW WEEKS WHEN CHAPTER SEVEN OF
CPC REPORT IS DEBATED.

COMMENT:

9. THE SOMARE GOVERNMENT HAS PROBABLY BEEN RULING
WITHOUT A MAJORITY IN THE HOUSE FOR THE PAST TWO
SESSIONS. THE UNITED PARTY FINDS ITSELF OBLIGED
TO SUPPORT THE COALITION BECAUSE THE GOVERNMENT'S
POSITIONS ARE MORE REASONABLE THAN THOSE COMING
FROM THE CPC. IT NEVERTHELESS WANTS TO JOIN THE
COALITION AND PLACE A NUMBER OF ITS MEMBERS IN THE
MINISTRY IN RECOGNITION OF ITS SUPPORT. IF WE WERE
DEALING WITH A PURE WESTMINISTER SYSTEM THE NUMBERS GAME
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WOULD REQUIRE A FORMAL RESTRUCTURING OF THE COALITION.
BUT HERE WE HAVE MELANESIAN HYBRID OF THE WESTMINISTER SYSTEM
WITH SUCH FLUID PARTY LINES THAT THE OUTCOME IS NOT AT ALL
THAT CERTAIN.
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